

evening at the White House, with the genome scholar from Harvard and Vint Cerf, who was one of the architects of the Internet. And we were talking about—they were talking about how the mysteries of the human gene could not have been solved without the advances in computer science. And then they put them all up on the screens, the formula for what our genes look like. And I pretended to understand that. [*Laughter*]

But I did understand the point they were making. So I said to them, I said, “Look, with these 100,000 sequences and all the possibilities and permutations, how much are we alike or different?” And Professor Lander said, “The truth is that all people, genetically, are 99.9 percent the same.” That confirms your philosophy, right?

Here’s the next point he made, which is more interesting to me. He said if you were to get groups of people together by ethnicity or race—let’s suppose you’ve got 100 European Jews together, and you’ve got 100 Arabs, and you’ve got 100 Iranians, and then you’ve got 100 people from the Yoruba Tribe in Nigeria, and you’ve got 100 Irish people together, and you put them all in a room with their groups, here’s what they said. They said the genetic differences among the individual groups—that is, among the Yorubas, among the Irish, among the Jews, among the Arabs—the genetic differences within the groups would be greater than the genetic differences between any one group and any other group. Now, think about that.

When you look at a profile of any sizeable ethnic group—Hispanic, African, you name it—the genetic differences of the individuals within the group are greater than the group genetic profile of one group as compared with another. In other words, the most advanced scientific knowledge confirms the wisdom of the Torah and tells us not to turn aside a stranger. Because it turns out a stranger is not so strange after all.

In the summer of 1994, as I remember, it was just before we went to the Wadi Araba to sign the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan. The late Prime Minister Rabin and the late King Hussein addressed the United States Congress. Near the end of his speech, Rabin turned to Hussein and said, and I quote, “We have both seen a lot in

our lifetime. We have seen too much suffering. What will you leave to your children? What will I leave to my grandchildren? I have only dreams,” he said, “to build a better world—a world of understanding and harmony; a world in which it is a joy to live. That is not asking for too much.”

That dream has united those of you in this organization for 85 years now. That dream in our time requires us to build one America and requires America to be a force for peace and harmony in the world. Think of it—Rabin gave his life so that we might build a world in which it is a joy to live. It is not asking for too much, but it will require all we can give.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Howard P. Berkowitz, national chairman, Abraham H. Foxman, national director, and Glenn Tobias, national executive committee chairman, Anti-Defamation League; Atlanta City Council President Robb Pitts; De Kalb County Chief Executive Liane Levetan; Representative John Lewis’ wife, Lillian; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; Eric Lander, director, Whitehead/MIT Center for Genome Research; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President’s Radio Address

October 30, 1999

Good morning. Two weeks ago I reaffirmed our Nation’s commitment to environmental protection and announced our plan to protect more than 40 million acres of roadless area in our national forests. Today I’m announcing new actions we’re taking to protect our air, our water, and some of our most precious lands.

One of the simplest but most potent tools in our fight against pollution is public information. By requiring industries to tell communities how much they pollute the air and water, we empower citizens to fight back and create a powerful incentive for industry to pollute less. Remarkably, in the decades

since the public's right-to-know about chemical releases became the law of the land, industry's toxic pollution has fallen nearly 50 percent.

Today, my administration is again expanding the public's right-to-know. We're acting to protect families against some of the most dangerous chemicals ever known, including mercury, dioxin, and PCB's. These chemicals are troubling for two reasons. First, they don't break down easily; instead, they build up in the environment and in our bodies. Second, many of them heighten the risk of cancer or other illness, even at very low doses.

Right now companies are required to disclose their uses of these chemicals only if they handle huge quantities. Beginning January 1st, we'll require companies to inform the public even if they're using much smaller quantities—in some cases, just 10 pounds a year. In the case of dioxin, a chemical that can cause harm even in minute quantities, companies must report if they produce as little as a tenth of a gram.

By posting this information for all to see, we can speed the day when families no longer need worry about hidden dangers in the air they breathe and the water they drink.

As we step up our fight against pollution, we must work as well to preserve lands across America that are still pristine. Today I'm announcing a new effort to protect the incomparable California desert so future generations can enjoy it in all its splendor. Five years ago I signed the California Desert Act, preserving millions of acres of stark but fragile landscape, rich with history and precious wildlife.

Today, to mark the anniversary, the non-profit Wildlands Conservancy is donating to the Federal Government an additional 14,000 acres within the Joshua Tree National Park—lands that otherwise might be developed. It's through partnerships like this that we can protect vital pieces of our national endowment.

We have also just completed our agreement to preserve New Mexico's spectacular Baca Ranch, home to one of the largest herds of wild elk anywhere in the world. I'm working closely with Congress to secure the fund-

ing to complete this purchase so that we can preserve this extraordinary land for all time.

In my balanced budget for this year, I proposed a \$1 billion lands legacy initiative to preserve other natural treasures and to help communities protect local green spaces. Regrettably, Congress has failed to provide even half the necessary funding.

And even more troubling, the Interior bill that Congress has produced once again is laden with provisions that would benefit special interests at the expense of our public interest and our environment. One of these provisions would allow excessive logging on our national forests. Another would let mining companies dump more toxic wastes on public lands. A third would grant a windfall to major companies that produce oil on Federal lands.

This makes no sense. Today, while I'm taking action to protect communities against toxic chemicals, Congress is giving special interests license to pollute our public lands. While I'm taking action to save some of our most treasured places, Congress is putting other precious lands at greater risk.

So let me be clear: If Congress sends me this Interior bill, I'll veto it. Again, I urge Congress to work with me on a better bill that is unburdened by these anti-environmental provisions and that has adequate funding to protect our natural landscape through the lands legacy initiative.

All through this century, since Theodore Roosevelt set us on the path of conservation, Americans have worked together across party lines to protect public health and restore and protect our environment. As we begin the new millennium, let our gift to the future be a new effort, together across party lines, to clean our air, to ensure safe water, and to preserve healthy, thriving lands.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:59 p.m. on October 29 at a private residence in Atlanta, GA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 29 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on Naming a Guided Missile Destroyer in Honor of the Late Senator John H. Chafee

October 30, 1999

I am honored to announce today that the 40th ship of the *Arleigh Burke* class of guided missile destroyers will be named in honor of the late Senator John H. Chafee of Rhode Island. Senator Chafee distinguished himself throughout a life dedicated to serving our Nation as a United States Senator, as Secretary of the Navy, as Governor of Rhode Island, and as a United States Marine in World War II and the Korean war. Given Senator Chafee's long association with the sea—with the Marine Corps, the Navy, and the great maritime State of Rhode Island—I can think of no better way to honor his many contributions than to name a warship in his honor.

The ship named in honor of Senator Chafee will be one of the most technologically advanced ships in the United States Navy. It will be capable of performing a wide range of missions in support of U.S. national security. Whether showing the flag in peacetime to build good will with other nations or employing its potent combat power in conflict, the ship will carry on Senator Chafee's legacy of honorable service to our Nation.

Remarks Following Church Services and an Exchange With Reporters

October 31, 1999

EgyptAir Flight 990 Aircraft Tragedy

The President. Like all Americans, Hillary and I are very saddened by the crash of the EgyptAir flight off the coast of Massachusetts. We are working on the recovery efforts. We know there has been an extensive loss of life, and we don't yet know what caused the accident. So I really think I can't say any more now, except—

Q. Have you talked with anyone, sir?

The President. Only our people. They've briefed me. But we don't know, we don't know what the cause of the accident is. We'll keep working until we find out.

Q. Concerns about foul play, sir?

The President. We don't know. We have no evidence of that at this time, and I think it's better if people draw no conclusions until we know something.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. outside Foundry United Methodist Church. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Interview With Bryant Gumbel of the Columbia Broadcast System's "Early Show"

October 31, 1999

Mr. Gumbel. Mr. President, first off, thank you very much for the time. I'm grateful.

The President. You're welcome. I'm glad to see you. Congratulations on your new program.

Mr. Gumbel. Thank you very much.

The President. It's going to ruin your golf game getting up at 4 o'clock every morning.

EgyptAir Flight 990 Aircraft Tragedy

Mr. Gumbel. Well it's not bad, though, you're on the tee by noon so it's okay. Let me turn serious for a moment.

We meet against the backdrop of the EgyptAir 990 crash. At this point in time, have you any reason to believe this was anything other than an accident?

The President. No. I don't. But I think it's important that we draw no conclusions about it and just let the investigation take its course.

Mr. Gumbel. Given history, given the volatile nature of Mideast relationships, do you see the absence of answers in any way impacting the Mideast talks in Oslo?

The President. Based on what I know now, I don't. I had a good talk with President Mubarak. I called him immediately when I got up this morning, and we talked about it a little bit. We're working together with the Egyptian Government in every way we can on this crash. So, now, I don't. So, unless there is some question I don't know about that arises in the next day or 2, I don't think it will.